



ASSASSINATION INFORMATION BUREAU

63 INMAN STREET, CAMBRIDGE MASSACHUSETTS 02139 (617) 661-8411

AIB OPENING STATEMENT

PRESS CONFERENCE

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We would like to say at the outset that we are indebted to the Church sub-committee staff and, in particular, Sen. Richard Schweiker for doing what no other government agency has ever done: openly and publicly acknowledging that, in Schweiker's words, "there is no longer any reason to have faith in the Warren Report's conclusion on the assassination of John Kennedy". The Assassination Information Bureau has for the past several years been urging a new investigation into this case and we appreciate the steps taken by Sen. Schweiker in that direction.

Unfortunately, the sub-committee's work falls far short of a full investigation. In defending the narrow scope of its investigation, the committee offers the same excuse given by the Warren Commission for its inadequacies: poor resources, a limited staff, and not enough time to carry out its investigation.

The AIB has always maintained that the basic arguments for conspiracy lie in the facts of Dallas - the ballistics, medical, and photographic evidence. The sub-committee, with the narrow limits of its investigation, did not go into this crucial area. We are disturbed by media accounts which claim that no evidence of conspiracy was found when, in fact, no investigation was made in that direction.

Two specific flaws in the Schweiker-Hart Report merit special criticism: 1) the omission of any consideration of Oswald's involvement with U.S. Intelligence Agencies- a matter directly under the purview of the committee's investigation; and 2) the assertion that Cuba was somehow involved in the assassination.

From 1956, when he entered the Marine Corps, until his death in 1963, Oswald had a record of encounters with the Intelligence Agencies that could scarcely escape the attention of a serious investigation. He enjoyed a high security clearance while stationed at an Air Force base in Atsugi, Japan. He accomplished his defection to Russia with funds in excess of his own limited savings and returned to the U.S. two and a half years later on a loan from the U.S. State Dept. Home in New Orleans, Oswald created a paper chapter of the pro-Castro Fair Play for Cuba Committee, where his actions had all the earmarks of a provocateur. As the Report notes, he moved in both pro and anti-Castro circles. Because of the committee's failure to investigate Oswald's background, it misses the likely motives for the CIA and FBI cover-ups.

If the committee's analysis of Oswald is inadequate, its speculations about Cuba are downright irresponsible. As we will make clear later, the AM/Lash story is a red herring. It could not have motivated Castro to retaliate and the report states there is no direct evidence that Castro was aware of AM/Lash's 1963 dealings with the CIA. Similar stories pointing to Castro's involvement, cited as unpursued leads, are mere innuendo. Finally, the notion that Castro was contemplating retaliation in late 1963 is contradicted by Kennedy Administration officials

such as William Atwood, former UN envoy, who was directly involved in negotiations towards better relations with Cuba. ~~Atwood~~ and Frank Mankiewicz, in an interview with the Cuban premier, reported that Castro was encouraged by Kennedy's friendly overtures in the fall of 1963. In any case, Cuba could not have expected better treatment from Kennedy's successor, Lyndon Johnson.

A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step. The Schweiker-Hart report is just that--a single step. Moreover, this single step could not have been made without thirteen years of determined agitation by assassinologists and political researchers who have struggled against the comfortable orthodoxy of the Warren Report.

The Church Committee has recommended that the new Senate Intelligence Oversight Committee pursue the new investigative leads. Sen. Inouye, the head of that committee, has said that the Kennedy assassination has a low priority and will not be scrutinized for at least six months. Considering the turtle-like pace of these investigations, it would be folly for us to relent in our own research. We have no reason to be optimistic about the prospects for a full Congressional inquiry.

The question persists: who killed John Kennedy?